



The White Oak Initiative: Landowners for Oaks Series is Guiding Forest Landowners to the Basics of White Oak Management

by Darren Morris and Jeff Stringer

White oak (*Quercus alba*) is considered a cornerstone species of upland oak forests. Different species of oaks have similar issues and respond likewise to common oak-management techniques. Therefore, it is important to understand that oak-management practices that focus on this keystone species produce results that benefit other oaks and improve the overall health and diversity of forest ecosystems.

The natural range of white oak is vast, making up over 100 million acres of forest across the eastern United States. In addition to white oak, seven other important oak species are also commonly found within these ecologically important upland oak forests. Of these eight upland oak species, white oak ranges the widest, nearly encompassing the other upland oaks entirely within its range. For these reasons, it becomes apparent that proper white oak management is key in creating and maintaining healthy upland oak ecosystems and the wildlife habitat, recreation, water resources, economic impacts, and many other benefits they provide.

Ownership of forests may be categorized mainly as public or privately owned. Public lands are mostly federal, state, and locally owned, while private lands are mostly corporate or private family owned forests. Across the range of white oak, private family owned forests dominate all other categories, making up 53%. However in Kentucky, well over 70% of all forests greater than 10 acres are private family owned forests.

Consequently, forest landowners have a huge impact on the health and diversity of white oak and upland oak forests. It is important for forest landowners to have access to basic oak-management issues and concerns when considering forest management options. As a guide for landowners to learn more about oaks and oak management, the White Oak Initiative: Landowners for Oaks Series publications were created. Eight publications refer-

ence identification and characteristics of upland oaks. These guides to identification and characteristics of white oak and seven other important oaks common to upland oak forests provide details on species identification as well as site location, uses, and other important information. Three publications provide landowners with the basics of white oak management. These publications inform forest landowners of the overall importance of white oak as a cornerstone species of our upland oak forests. Also included is a basic explanation of regeneration and recruitment issues that are a concern with white oak and upland oaks as well as an introduction to the 10 management practices developed to create and maintain healthy upland oak forests.



The White Oak Initiative: Landowners for Oaks Series is produced by the Cooperative Extension Service, University of Kentucky, and Department of Forestry and Natural Resources in support of the White Oak Initiative. All publications can be viewed and downloaded at www.whiteoakinitiative.org or <http://forestry.ca.uky.edu/woi>.

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